United Nations E/CONF.98/104

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 July 2007
English
Original: French

Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 21-30 August 2007
Item 13 of the provisional agenda*
Toponymic websites

The website of the Commission de toponymie du Québec, Canada

Submitted by Canada**

Summary

This paper briefly outlines the features of the website of the Commission de toponymie du Québec, Canada. The site has been evolving since 1998, and includes a name search, access to topographic maps, and the origin and history of many place and feature names in Quebec.

The website of the Commission de toponymie du Québec, Canada

In 2002-2003, the Commission de toponymie du Québec in Canada undertook a technological restructuring, moving from a UNIX to a Windows environment. The conversion ended on 3 March 2003. This operation was conducted in order to assure the modernization of our technological environment and to facilitate the development of our Web services. The Commission's website offers the possibility of accessing the Quebec placenames database, which contains the corpus of all official names, as well as of names that used to be official, at www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/ct/topos/topos.html. The use of this tool continues to increase. Thus, whereas some 9,800 visits to the placename database were counted in July 2003, this number reached 50,211 by March 2007.

In order to better ascertain the profile of this service's users, the Commission de toponymie undertook a study of their habits. The majority of users are well-educated Francophones from various professional backgrounds, and that they use the service for their work in order to determine the exact name of a place and its

* E/CONF.98/1.
** Prepared by the Commission de toponymie du Québec, Canada.

07-41135 (E) 020807 020807

proper spelling. While expressing satisfaction for the toponymic services offered, users asked for more information on the language of the names researched, as well as on their origins, meanings, histories, etc. The recommendations of this study have inspired and continue to inspire the improvement programme for the Quebec placenames database.

. For the past several years, the Commission has carried out research on the origins or meanings of the geographical names that it has made official. As of 31 March 2003, the Commission had published information concerning the origins or meanings of 48,000 entries; five years later, some 64,000 entries show such data.

Thus, the public may now refer to a topographic map at the scale of 1:20,000 in the toponymic file of the Quebec placenames database. This feature is available for the vast majority of geographical names entries. Only thoroughfare names and geographical names found north of the 55th parallel are excluded from this option.

Finally, the Commission has thoroughly overhauled the visual presentation of its website at www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca. This new presentation has been online since April 2007.